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Prison Issues Board Meeting, December 6, 2011

First, I'd like to thank the board for listening to my comments today. My name is Valerie Close. I have a college degree and work in accounting. My husband is incarcerated at the Montana State Prison. In February, we'll have been married for 9 years.

Video Conferencing – It is my understanding that video conferencing is being considered as the main method of visiting at the Montana State Prison. I'm not sure why those who have been delegated authority feel the need to continue to stretch a taut rubber band unless their intent is to see it snap. To those who live in a fantasy, video visits would eliminate drugs in prison. Unfortunately, this is simply not true. It would be naïve of this board to believe that visitors are the only ones bringing drugs in or that the majority of drugs coming into the prison are coming from visitors. It is simply a fact that there are some corrupt correctional officers just like there are some corrupt visitors, and video visitation will not stop those who are intent on breaking the law. It will simply be a form of punishing the multitude for the actions of the few.

It would seem that the prison is purposely trying to drive away family and friends of inmates. These relationships are essential to the inmate and to the family members. According to a study entitled Family Support: What It Means To Male Inmates, "Family support for incarcerated individuals is an important issue that receives little consideration in society even though it may be one of the greatest factors for change in the system for combating recidivism rates." The article concludes with a quote from an inmate, "Without family support majority of the hope one has fades over time. Family also does the time with you and sometimes it is harder for them even though there (sic) not behind the bars. I believe there should be more programs/interactions with family/community in order to successfully reintegrate out." (Study written by Leigh-Anna Fournelle and Staci Hofferber -- Department of Human Development and Family Studies, 2008)

The Montana State Prison is a member of the Montana Alliance for Families Touched by Incarceration (MAFTI). MAFTI adopted the national bill of rights for children of the incarcerated. Number 5 of the bill of rights says children of the incarcerated have the right, "to speak with, see, and touch" their parent. A child cannot "touch" their parent thru a video screen. Number 3 of the bill of rights says that the child should, "be considered when decisions are made about" their parent. Obviously, by going to video conference visits, the child's rights have not been considered. For example, my husband is looking forward to seeing and hugging our grandchildren this summer. Likewise, our grandkids are looking forward to hugging grandpa. However, if video visits are put into place, our grandkids will not be visiting grandpa. It would just be too hard on them. They would not understand why they have to watch grandpa on TV nor would they be able to develop a relationship with him because of the limited interaction. And this

is not something that would be isolated to our family. Nor would it just affect children of the incarcerated. The family unit as a whole would suffer.

In the alternative, the prison should look at strengthening family bonds. In the article, Conjugal Visits: Preserving family bonds behind bars, Patrick Rodgers says, "Today, the conjugal visit program is designed primarily to preserve family bonds. The idea is that supporting these bonds will strengthen the inmate's chances for rehabilitation and lessen rates of recidivism." The article goes on to describe conjugal visits "As the name implies, Extended Family Visits are not limited simply to spouses. In most states, up to three family members can be present at a visit. The time in the apartment allows the family unit to act as a whole. Internationally, the conjugal visit is seen as an important part of the prisoner's interaction with the outside world - a vivid reminder of life on the other side of the prison walls." (Conjugal Visits: Preserving family bonds behind bars Patrick Rodgers_- Sep 2008)

Eliminating Drugs and Contraband. If the prison is wanting to cut down on the amount of drugs being brought into the prison why not try doing what Texas has done and extend random drug testing to agency employees. In June 2010, the Houston Chronicle quoted Texas Senator Whitmore as saying, "the testing plan is 'one more tool to use in removing contraband from prisons.'" (Houston Chronicle, June 2010.) Another approach that many state prisons are successfully using are K-9 units that routinely search visitor's and employee vehicles and inmate's cells.

Maybe neither of these ideas is a fit for Montana's prison, but neither are video visits. I have visited almost every weekend for the past two years and I have heard of only one visitor who tried to bring in contraband, somehow using the hood of their coat. It is because of this one person that MSP made a policy stating that visitors cannot wear coats or jackets with hoods, no matter how cold the Montana winter gets. I've watched as parents have to take their children's coats back to their cars because it had a hood on it. Most of these people cannot afford to buy new coats without hoods or detachable hoods for their kids. And I don't even know if you can find an infant coat that doesn't have a hood.

Earlier I mentioned the atmosphere at MSP being like a "taut rubber band." Hopefully you are wondering what is causing this atmosphere. Simply put, it is some of the ridiculous policies and decisions that are being made, coupled with a gestapo-like treatment of visitors and correctional officers by Major Woods and Lt Lakel. It would seem their purpose is to drive family and friends of inmates away. Maybe you're thinking I'm just a whining wife of an inmate that complains about every policy, but that is simply not true. I, and those that visit, are fully aware we are entering a prison and there are rules and policies that must be abided by. Most of us understand the reason why we go thru a metal detector and are patted down when entering the prison. We understand why we are patted down every time we use the restroom. We understand why we have to hang

our coats in an area that is off limits when visiting. We understand why our incarcerated family member is watched while using the restroom and is stripped searched when leaving a visit.

But it is hard to understand why we cannot put our arms around each other when having a picture taken, so the rubber band gets pulled a little tighter. The visiting room has several cameras and mirrors along with two correctional officers watching us at all times. Yet, we have to stand side-by-side like soldiers. All hands must be able to be seen in the picture, therefore no close ups can be taken. Personally I'd rather be patted down before and after a picture and be able to put my arm around my husband and stand naturally.

It is hard to understand why we are not allowed to purchase paper plates to eat off of. Again, the rubber band is pulled a little tighter. Major Woods says it is distracting to the visiting room officers; however, we are allowed to buy a cup of coffee or cocoa. We are allowed to use the restroom which requires an escort. Why after all this time are plates suddenly an issue? Since the plates were bought with IWF funds, why do the inmates/visitors need to pay for them anyway? So what happened to the thousands of plates that were put in a closet after Major Woods said visitors and inmates could no longer purchase them? Correctional officers from other areas of the prison came in and took handfuls of them. We watched for weeks as the plates disappeared, and we weren't allowed to purchase them.

Then the most recent insult that pulled the rubber band a little tighter was when Christmas decorations were taken down in the visiting room and thrown in the trash. Visiting room officers received authorization from Capt. McNeal to put up the Christmas decorations that were purchased several years ago using the IWF. The decorations consisted of Christmas lights, two banners (one said "Seasons Greetings" and the other said "Ho, Ho, Ho"), a table top Santa and Mrs. Claus, along with a few misc. items – none of which had any religious preference. On Sunday, the lieutenant on duty decided the decorations were a security threat and directed the visiting room officers to immediately take down all the items and "throw them in the trash." So families watched as Christmas was torn off the walls. Since when are lights a security threat? Does MSP really believe that an inmate who was looking to cause an incident would run to the wall, tear the lights down, and lasso someone. An inmate would probably pick up the chair he was sitting on and use it. So will our chairs and tables be taken away next because they are a security threat? Whatever happened to the family Christmas parties at the prison? Now we can't even have lights?!

We already know that Major Woods is looking to get rid of the vending machines so we can't even have a meal with our loved one. (The rubber band is pulled tighter.)

In conclusion, maybe to you these are all little things, but when all you have is a few hours with each other as a family, they are huge things. Video conference visits are not the solution to any "contraband problem." These visits would only create more issues and probably cause a

tense situation to erupt. I respectfully request this board to lay aside the suggestion of video conference visiting for MSP inmates and their families. Furthermore, I hope that this board will seriously look into the ridiculous decisions made by those that have been given unchecked authority to write policy at their whim. Thank you.

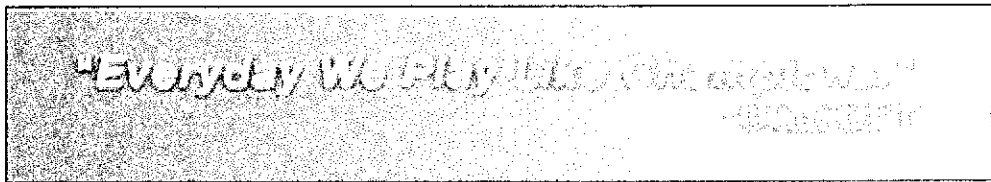
The National Bill of Rights for Children of the Incarcerated*

Every child with a parent in prison (or alternatives to prison) has the following rights:

1. To be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest;
2. To be heard when decisions are made about me;
3. To be considered when decisions are made about my parent;
4. To be well-cared for in my parent's absence;
5. To speak with, see, and touch my parent;
6. To support as I face my parent's incarceration;
7. To not be judged, blamed or labeled because my parent is incarcerated;
8. To have a lifelong relationship with my parent.



* The *Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents* was written in 2003 by Californians Nell Bernstein, (journalist and author) and Gretchen Newby (a practitioner serving children of prisoners), outlining the principles needed to ensure the well-being of these highly at-risk children.



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Houston senator praises plan for prison staff's drug tests

TDCJ extends drug testing to staff

Sen. Whitmire hails decision to include employees in random checks

ALLAN TURNER

HOUSTON CHRONICLE



Sen. John Whitmire, D-Houston, said he "can't imagine why anyone would object" to the policy. Photo: AP, Harry Cabluck / HC

Houston and Texas

State Sen. John Whitmire, a longtime critic of what he considers lax state prison security, on Thursday praised



prison administrators' decision to extend random drug testing to tens of thousands of agency employees.

Whitmire, chairman of the Senate's *Corrections Committee*, called the testing plan "one more tool to use in removing contraband from prisons." The plan will be presented next week to the prison system's governing board.

TDCJ spokeswoman *Whitcomb* said no date has been set for the start of the random urine testing, which will apply to approximately 26,000 correctional officers, 1,300 parole officers and other personnel holding security-related jobs.

She said the testing is an extension of routine screening of job applicants and employees suspected of substance abuse. In the last fiscal year, she said, 69 of 10,180 job applicants failed the drug test; 13 of 60 employees suspected of drug abuse tested positive.

Considered in the past

Lyons said employees who test positive will face administrative sanctions, including termination.

Lyons stopped short of describing the measure as an attempt to control contraband smuggling that has plagued a number of the agency's 112 prisons.

"It's something that has been considered in the past," she said. "Some other states have been doing it for a while."

Whitmire, D-Houston, said the random testing is "long overdue," adding that sources have informed him that some prison employees engaged in smuggling drugs into lockups are themselves substance abusers.

"I can't imagine why anyone would object," Whitmire said. "It ought to improve the safety and working conditions of all prison employees. Most major law enforcement organizations have such a policy. Let's get on with it."

Special search teams

Random drug testing is the latest in a series of measures implemented by prison authorities in an effort to enhance prison security. Earlier, the department created special teams to search inmates' cells for contraband, installed video cameras and tightened security checks for those entering prisons.

Many of the measures were prompted by last November's escape of convicted rapist *James Earl Ray Jr.*, who used an apparently smuggled pistol to overcome two armed guards transporting him to another prison.

Modern Conjugal Visits

Although conjugal programs are still used as an incentive for good behavior, they are no longer applied as a means to increase work productivity. Today, the conjugal visit program is designed primarily to preserve family bonds. The idea is that supporting these bonds will strengthen the inmate's chances for rehabilitation and lessen rates of recidivism. Thus, most Extended Family Visit programs are limited to inmates and spouses who were legally married *prior* to incarceration.

A Privilege, not a Right

Typically, the states that offer Extended Family Programs are extremely selective when it comes to choosing who can participate. Not every convict wearing a wedding ring is automatically eligible. Each state's Department of Corrections has its own highly specific set of eligibility rules and requirements. For example, inmates must be serving in a medium security prison or less. They cannot have any recent behavior or rule violations. And once they have jumped through all the necessary hoops, the prisoner must go through a mandatory health screening.

On the other side, those wishing to visit the prisoner must also qualify for eligibility. A spouse must (1.) be on the prisoner's approved visitor list (2.) provide proof of relation (3.) pass a background check (4.) submit to a search and (5.) dress appropriately. In California, the list of banned clothing is extensive but common sense. Transparent clothing, bare midriffs, strapless attire, and anything with obscene or offensive language or drawings won't make it past security. In Connecticut, the Department of Corrections tells visitors not to wear "revealing, seductive, or offensive clothing or attire that draws undue attention."

So, just where do these visits take place?

Prison scenes in movies often show couples on the phone separated by glass or, at best, sitting in a cafeteria patrolled by watchful guards. This is where we return to the idea of special buildings for family visits. Inmates who qualify for visits are furnished with private, apartment-style settings within the prison walls.

As the name implies, Extended Family Visits are not limited simply to spouses. In most states, up to three family members can be present at a visit. The time in the apartment allows the family unit to act as a whole. Internationally, the conjugal visit is seen as an important part of the prisoner's interaction with the outside world - a vivid reminder of life on the other side of the prison walls. In Russia, visitors can bring food and civilian clothing for the prisoner. In Canada, the apartments are designed to look like homes. Some even have gardens and barbecues.

In the US, Extended Family Visit programs are justified by 5 of the 6 participating states on the grounds that it helps preserve the family. The hope is that maintaining familial relationships during incarceration will motivate prisoners to improve their behavior both behind bars and upon release.

Family Support: What It Means To Male Inmates

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Keywords: family, inmates, support, incarceration

Abstract

Family support for incarcerated individuals is an important issue that receives little consideration in society even though it may be one of the greatest factors for change in the jail system for combating recidivism rates. This study investigated the attitudes of 44 male inmates regarding family support while incarcerated in a Midwestern Wisconsin jail. It was hypothesized that increased family support of inmates while incarcerated would have a positive effect on the inmates and their behavior. Survey data was analyzed using frequencies and a reliability analysis. Results indicated that family support had significant effects on inmates while incarcerated. It was also found that overall conditions of the family interactions for the individuals that are incarcerated were unsatisfactory. Based on these findings, it is important for people to recognize that incarcerated individuals benefit from support from their family and jail environment while incarcerated. Implications for practitioners and future researchers include a need for greater efforts towards awareness and education of family involvement with inmates. It would also be helpful to improve the incorporation of family support for jail systems.

We get to visit our family 20 min. only 3 times a week. Now do you think that is enough time to spend with your family? The environment we visit our family in is very disturbing and has no privacy. We can hear other family's conversations and we have to yell just to hear one another. My family has a big influence and should be able to have more visiting time. It would help time a lot more.

- (Anonymous inmate from authors' study)

According to Homer (1979) and Jorgensen (1986), incarceration causes traumatic separation leading to family estrangement, and theorists assert that the loss of a family member to prison is even more demoralizing to wives and children than a loss resulting from death (as cited in Carlson and Cervera 1991). According to Arditti (2003), the United States held the record for the highest number of incarcerated individuals, and at least ten million children in the year 2003 had a parent involved in the criminal justice system (as cited in Reed & Reed, 1998; Seymour, 2001). For the purpose of this study, family support is defined, as "the relationship between individuals where contact is frequent through in person interactions, phone calls, letters, and emotional support is an important and significant factor." The relationship must be beneficial to both parties (DeGenova & Rice, 2002). The authors researched the literature regarding family involvement with inmates and how that relationship affected the behavior of inmates. The

authors also surveyed the male inmate perspective, ages 18 and above, regarding this issue. The purpose of this study was to examine the male inmate perspectives on family support during the incarceration period.

In researching what environmental effects may have on incarcerated individuals upon release, the authors looked at the extent of family involvement during the incarceration period. Concerning family involvement in the corrections system, it is essential to utilize other researchers' findings in order to build further accurate research. Relevant literature focused on social support as an important factor for incarcerated individuals, especially when referred to as "family." The literature suggested that there was more clarity and information needed in relation to social support for incarcerated individuals. The articles researched discussed family involvement as being a large factor in rehabilitation. Therefore, the authors' rationale for using the Carlson and Cervera article was that there is little research surrounding the research question and this article had the main idea that a family thrives when they can adapt to stress with competent coping skills (Staton-Tindall, Royse, & Luckfeld, 2007; Freudenberg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins, & Richie, 2005; Arditti, 2003; Carlson & Cervera, 1991).

Staton-Tindall, Royse, and Luckfeld (2007) found that incarcerated women's view of social support was not dependent upon their criminal behavior but actually on the length of time they are incarcerated and away from their family. Staton-Tindall, Royse, and Luckfeld concluded that, because a majority of incarcerated women may not have solid supportive relationships, steps need to be taken to better understand the difference of perception regarding social support. These steps are important because it is likely that social support is associated with negative behaviors.

Freudenberg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins, and Richie (2005) found that in adult women, peer support has a positive influence on the decision toward further drug use/re-offenses. These findings were not the same when compared to adolescent males; researchers found that the more peer support an adolescent male has, the more negative influences they have on their behaviors.

Arditti (2003) found that visitation seems to have both negative and positive effects for families. It provides an outlet for connection as well as a barrier to feelings of separation. The authors also suggested that contact visiting was essential for maintaining bonds with incarcerated individuals and their families. Contact visiting includes face-to-face and physical contact. Carlson and Cervera (1991) found that the best predictor of a successful release from prison (not re-offending) was having a stable and supportive family environment to which the inmate will return. The study found that the incarceration period is an extremely stressful experience, and the stress is best alleviated through support from significant others. Although couples in this study coped fairly well, there were signs they could have used some further assistance (as cited in Carlson & Cervera 1991).

According to the literature, social support was a major factor for incarcerated individuals regarding their success upon release. Family is the most influential type of social support. As a result, further research is needed on this topic; the incarcerated population is underrepresented in today's society. It is important to have and utilize this information in an effort to keep jails safe and decrease the number of inmates. It is important in further research to work with the inmates directly because this gives an

opportunity for inmates to voice their needs and concerns regarding family relationships and the affect it has on them during their incarceration.

Family Systems Theory, as described by Broderick and Smith (1979), describes the different subsystems that exist in the family, for example the role of mother, father, sister, brother, etc. Within the family, each of these subsystems has an effect on the other subsystems because the family is a unit of interrelated parts (as cited in DeGenova and Rice, 2002). Homeostasis is the main goal for the family in order to achieve and maintain harmony according to the Family Systems Theory (as cited in DeGenova and Rice, 2002). This study predicts that the actions of the other family members toward the incarcerated individual will have an effect on the inmate's perception of their sentence and chance of re-offending.

The purpose of this study was to examine the male inmate perspectives on family support during the incarceration period. The male population of the jail the authors' surveyed was considerably greater than the female population. It is the authors' hope that correction officers, correction program coordinators, jail administrators, social workers, and students will use the results from this study to improve the conditions in jails, to facilitate family support, and ultimately to decrease the recidivism rate. The central research question in this study was: "What is the male inmate perspective of family support during the period of incarceration"? The authors hypothesized that inmates would score higher on variables with a general family support emphasis and score lower on variables having to do with jail environmental support for visitation. We predicted these outcomes because, according to the Family Systems theory, the subsystem's actions have an effect on the entire system. Literature also found some positive evidence regarding strong social support and rehabilitation.

Method

Participants

The site of this study was at a Midwestern Wisconsin county jail. The participants included 44 male inmates ranging from 18 through 65 years of age. Of the 44 participants 17 were between the ages of 18 and 25, 12 were between the ages of 26 and 35, 12 were between the ages of 36 and 45, three were between the ages of 46 and 65, and zero were 66 or older.

Research Design

The purpose of this survey was to generalize the results of this analysis to a larger population. . This study utilized a cross-sectional design and employed purposive sampling in order to gather information from a specific set of individuals who were incarcerated. Data was collected via self-administered questionnaires because this method allowed for quick return of data. The ethical protection of human subjects was provided by completing the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) training; our study was approved by the IRB.

Data Collection Instrument

In order to collect information regarding family support and inmates, the authors designed a survey. The survey included a cover letter with an implied consent statement, a description of the study, definitions of any terms not commonly known, potential risks

and benefits, estimated time commitment, confidentiality procedures, voluntary participation information, contact information of the research team and the supervisor, and instructions for completing the survey.

The survey consisted of one demographic question relating to age. Participants were then given ten closed-ended statements based on a 5-point Likert scale which measured the intensity of the respondents' attitudes ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). Questions were based on literature and theory regarding what factors relate to attitudes regarding family support and inmates.

The survey instrument had both face validity and content validity. Because the questions and concepts addressed in the survey were literature inspired, the authors felt the questions clearly connected to the larger issue of family support and inmates, and the authors feel this demonstrates adequate face validity. The questions addressed a broad range of issues regarding family support and inmates and demonstrate adequate content validity. To ensure the survey was understandable, it was piloted to five undergraduate students. Feedback indicated that the survey was clear and ready for distribution.

Procedure

The authors initially contacted the Jail Administrator to ask for permission to collect data but were referred to a second Sergeant contact who acted as the liaison throughout the research process. The Sergeant at the jail asked inmates if they would like to voluntarily participate in the survey prior to the authors' arrival and then gathered willing participants together at the predetermined date and time. The authors introduced themselves and read the consent form, emphasizing that inmates' participation was not mandatory and that they could withdraw at any time. The authors offered reading assistance when needed, discussed the importance of their participation, and thanked them for their time. The authors instructed participants to detach and keep the informed consent information and answer the survey. When finished, participants were instructed to hand in their surveys, pens, and staples to ensure safety and to cooperate with the jail's regulations. The authors then thanked participants again for their time and reminded them that they could withdraw at anytime. Completed surveys were stored in a secure location until data analysis.

Data Analysis Plan

The first question on the survey was a demographic variable: age. The data was first cleaned and then coded using acronyms for each variable as given in the following figure:

REL	to determine if the inmate's relationship with his family was important during his incarceration period
TIM	if the amount of time spent each week with the inmate's family while incarcerated was satisfactory
CON	if the area provided for visitation was adequate for the inmate's family and his needs
PVY	if family visits were in a confidential setting

BEV	if being able to interact with his family while incarcerated improved his behavior
TRT	if he and his family were treated respectfully during visiting opportunities
EMN	if after interacting with his family he was more hopeful
AJS	if he appreciated the assistance offered by the jail staff to help him and his family cope with the separation
NUM	if the number of family members he gets to see at any one time was acceptable
QUA	and if the time he spent with his family was found to be worthwhile quality time

Figure 1. Variable abbreviations and definitions

The individual was used as our level of analysis. Data analysis included a frequency analysis and a reliability analysis.

Results

Each variable was subjected to frequency distribution analysis. Results indicated that there was no missing data. A reliability analysis was run to indicate if the ten questions were a reliable index to measure the major concept: family support during the period of incarceration. A Chronbach's Alpha value of .66 indicated that the survey questions were a reliable measure of male inmates' perspectives of family support during the period of incarceration. We received qualitative comments at the end of a number of our surveys. These comments will be analyzed and themes determined in our Discussion section.

Table 1

Inmate Responses by Percentage

Information	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Inmate's relationship with his family during his incarceration period	2.3%	4.5%	4.5%	15.9%	72.7%
The amount of time spent each week with the inmate's family while incarcerated was satisfactory	36.4%	20.5%	15.9%	15.9%	11.4%
The area provided for visitation was adequate for the inmate's family and his needs	22.7%	20.5%	31.8%	20.5%	4.5%
Family visits were in a confidential	18.2%	22.7%	29.5%	25.0%	4.5%

setting					
Being able to interact with his family while incarcerated improved his behavior	4.5%	0.0%	6.8%	25.0%	63.6%
He and his family were treated respectfully during visiting opportunities	2.3%	2.3%	27.3%	34.1%	34.1%
After interacting with his family he was more hopeful	0.0%	2.3%	13.6%	31.8%	52.3%
He appreciated the assistance offered by the jail staff to help him and his family cope with the separation	9.1%	15.9%	38.6%	27.3%	9.1%
The number of family members he gets to see at any one time was acceptable	20.5%	31.8%	15.9%	18.2%	13.6%
The time he spent with his family was found to be worthwhile quality time	2.3%	11.4%	15.9%	22.7%	47.7%

Discussion

Overall, results supported the hypothesis that inmates would report higher/ positive statements regarding family support variables and report lower/ negative statements towards variables having to do with jail environmental support for visitation.. This could be the result of a variety of factors such as funding, space in facility, and staff knowledge and training. The authors will first discuss each dependent variable in terms of how the results either agreed or disagreed with the literature and/ theoretical framework and then address limitations to the study, implications for practitioners, implications for future research, and concluding remarks.

Results showed that more respondents agreed than disagreed that their relationship with their family was important to them during their incarceration period; this supported literature indicating that a solid family relationship is the best predictor of successful release from prison (Carlson & Cervera, 1991).

A majority of respondents disagreed that the amount of time spent each week with their family while incarcerated was satisfactory. This correlated with literature that found that lack of physical contact, lack of privacy, long waits, short visits, poor environmental conditions, and disrespectful treatment by jail staff contributed to the small number and low quality of visitations (Arditti, 2003). Mixed support was shown regarding the area provided for visitation meeting the inmates' needs. The Literature indicated that the environment provided for visitation was not adequate. The authors found that the majority of the inmates surveyed were satisfied with the conditions the visitations were held in. Researchers within the literature found that the area was not conducive for physical touching of the inmate and that privacy was not up to standards of the family and inmate (Arditti, 2003).

This mixed support may be due to the language used in the question, particularly regarding the word "adequate." The authors feel that some additional help with the definition of the words may have been needed. These conclusions were made after observing the inmates during the survey and communicating with jail staff. Mixed support was also shown regarding the visits being in a confidential setting, and again literature found that the family and inmates felt discomfort with the privacy of the setting (Arditti, 2003). This mixed support may have been due to the language used in the question, particularly regarding the words "confidential setting" and the understanding of their meaning. A majority of our respondents agreed that being able to interact with their family while incarcerated improved their behavior, which was supported in the literature (Staton-Tindall, Royse, & Luekfeld, 2007). Interestingly, results showed that more respondents agreed that they and their family were treated respectfully during visits. This finding was not in agreement with literature, which indicated that participants felt as though they were not treated respectfully while in the facility. A majority of respondents agreed that, after interacting with their family, they were more hopeful. This finding support literature as well (Carlson & Cervera, 1991).

There was mixed support regarding the assistance offered by the jail staff to help the inmates and their families cope with the separation 25% either strongly disagreed or disagreed while 36% strongly agreed or agreed. The literature found that the relationship between the family and inmate was essential to their success (Carlson & Cervera, 1991). This mixed support may have been due to the language used in the question particularly regarding the word "assistance" and the understanding of its meaning. The authors felt as though they could have given a definition and example as to what "assistance" from the staff they were referring to that would have given the inmates an idea of how to better express their answers. A majority of respondents disagreed that the number of family members they get to see at any one time is acceptable. Lastly, a majority of the respondents agreed that the time spent with their family was worthwhile, quality time. This was supported in the literature which found that 18% of potential visitors did not want to visit at all because the visiting conditions and the lack of actual physical contact decreased the quality of the visits too much (Arditti, 2003).

Qualitative comments targeted visitation time and the amount of family members allowed, age limitations of visitors, and other special requests. Regarding amount of time allotted for visitation, inmates expressed the need for extended time - especially involving family members that had to travel great distances in order to visit. The number of family members allowed on the inmates list was reported to be too few. The inmates also stated that the age limit for visitors (12 years of age) sometimes prohibited them from seeing their own children. A few other requests included internet conferences with family members who are overseas fighting in Iraq and for visitors unable to travel for visitations.

Limitations

A small sample size inhibits the authors' ability to generalize to the larger population of male inmates in county jails across the country. Another limitation was the authors' inability to randomly select participants due to the limited number of eligible participants. Other limitations of this study were due to the location of the jail, being that it is in a small rural county in Wisconsin.

Implications for Practitioners

Results showed that there is a need to inform correction officers, correction program coordinators, jail administrators, social workers, the justice system, and students about family support and what it means to male inmates. Practitioners should be aware of the positive effects of family visitation and the likelihood that positive family support both in and out of jail could potentially lead to lower rates of recidivism.

Practitioners can learn about these issues via conferences, seminars, educational programs, university classes. Group demonstrations with jail staff that allow for hands on learning regarding inmate care and create a conducive atmosphere for family interactions. Education will support the inmates' relationship with their families and improve behavior while incarcerated. The authors also recommend specific training regarding family support and its effect on the inmate.

Implications for Future Research

The authors recommend that the next step of research use a larger and more random sample in order to generalize to the larger population. In addition, it would be beneficial to compare male inmates with female inmates in order to see differences that may exist between genders. If differences are found, this might imply different approaches to the issue would be needed. Given that this population is vulnerable and inaccessible, research would greatly benefit from a qualitative study that would allow in-depth, specialized information allowing the inmates to expand on their answers giving them a stronger voice. If this study were to be replicated, the authors suggest rewording or giving examples of and better defining words found in *CON*, *PVY*, and *AJS*.

Conclusion

As a result of this study, the authors hope that correction officers, correction program coordinators, jail administrators, the justice system, social workers, and students will recognize the need for family support and the need for jail environmental support regarding visitation. This is an issue that both inmates and literature indicate needs to be improved, studied, and addressed. In conclusion, the authors believe one of the participants of this study said it best:

Without family support majority of the hope one has fades over time.
Family also does the time with you and sometimes it is harder for them
even though there (sic) not behind the bars. I believe there should be more
programs/ interactions with family/community in order to successfully
reintegrate out.

- (Anonymous inmate)

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